

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA
CHARLESTON DIVISION

The Sustainability Institute, *et al.*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

Donald J. Trump, in his official capacity as
President of the United States, *et al.*

Defendants,

C.A. No. 2:25-2152-RMG

DECLARATION OF

I, Karen Woodrich, declare under penalty of perjury the following:

1. My name is Karen Woodrich. I make this declaration based upon the knowledge that I have acquired through the performance of my official duties.

2. I am the Deputy Chief for Programs within the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, and I am stationed in Washington, D.C.. As the Deputy Chief for Programs, my duties include, among other things, overseeing all of the financial and conservation technical assistance programs authorized under Title II of the Farm Bill as well as related programs and initiatives.

Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities

3. Six of the awards at issue in this litigation are part of the Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Initiative (PCSC). PCSC was launched in early 2022 as an exercise of the Department's authority under Section 5 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act.

4. USDA published a Request for Information in the Federal Register on September 30, 2021, seeking public comment and input on the design of this new initiative. This preceded the enactment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) on November 15, 2021. The deadline for applications for the first round of funding was May 6, 2022, and the deadline for the second round of funding was June 10, 2022. These deadlines preceded the enactment of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) on August 16, 2022.

5. A copy of the National Funding Opportunity (NFO) notice is available at https://files.simpler.grants.gov/opportunities/337878/attachments/314695/Full_Announcement_USDA-NRCS-COMM-22-NOFO0001139_Revised_03.11.2022_.pdf. That notice was posted on Grants.gov, and an archived copy of the award information is available at <https://simpler.grants.gov/opportunity/337878>.

6. NRCS noted in the NFO that “the authority for this funding opportunity is the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714 et seq). In addition, NRCS wrote that the funding opportunity “leverages the authorities under Section 5 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act at 15 U.S.C. 714c with particular emphasis on [subsection (e)].” In the 64-page NFO, there is no mention of IRA or IIJA.

7. Section 5 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act affords USDA with discretion on the creation of new programs and initiatives.

8. PCSC is not funded by IRA or IIJA. No funds from IRA or IIJA were statutorily designated for PCSC, were ever made available for PCSC, or have been awarded to any recipient

or subrecipient through PCSC. The appropriations in IRA and IJA for the Commodity Credit Corporation are directed for other programs, and there is no mention of PCSC in either IRA or IJA.

9. PCSC was not created by Congress, nor is it specifically appropriated for by Congress. Its creation was an exercise of the discretionary authority in the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act. PCSC uses the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, which are generally financed through borrowing authority. Congress also provides the Commodity Credit Corporation with an indefinite appropriation in annual appropriations acts to reimburse it for net realized losses, as specified in an annual audited financial statement. Congress did not direct the Commodity Credit Corporation's borrowing authority or annual appropriations to PCSC.

10. ***The Conservation Innovation Fund.*** On April 14, 2025, USDA notified The Conservation Innovation Fund that its grant would be terminated, as USDA's review of its grant showed that it failed to meet USDA's priority that "a minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers." See Exhibit A - Notice of Termination for The Conservation Innovation Fund NR233A750004G045 (Apr. 14, 2025). USDA terminated The Conservation Innovation Fund's grant on April 22, 2025. See Exhibit B - Termination Letter for The Conservation Innovation Fund NR233A750004G045 (Apr. 22, 2025).

11. ***Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley.*** Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley is a subrecipient of the award to The Conservation Innovation Fund.

12. ***Marbleseed.*** On April 14, 2025, USDA notified Marbleseed that its grant would be terminated, as USDA's review of its grant showed that it failed to meet USDA's priority that "a minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers." See Exhibit C - Notice of Termination for Marbleseed NR243A750004G010 (Apr. 14, 2025). USDA terminated Marbleseed's grant on

April 22, 2025. *See* Exhibit D - Termination Letter for Marbleseed NR243A750004G010 (Apr. 22, 2025).

13. ***Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture (“Pasa”)***. On April 14, 2025, USDA notified Pasa that its grant would be terminated, as USDA’s review of its grant showed that it failed to meet USDA’s priority that “a minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers.” *See* Exhibit E - Notice of Termination for Pasa NR233A750004G025 (Apr. 14, 2025). USDA terminated Pasa’s grant on April 22, 2025. *See* Exhibit F - Termination Letter for Pasa NR233A750004G025 (Apr. 22, 2025).

14. ***Organic Association of Kentucky (“OAK”)***. On April 14, 2025, USDA notified OAK that its grant would be terminated, as USDA’s review of its grant showed that it failed to meet USDA’s priority that “a minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers.” *See* Exhibit G - Notice of Termination for OAK NR233A750004G092 (Apr. 14, 2025). USDA terminated OAK’s grant on April 22, 2025. *See* Exhibit H - Termination Letter for OAK NR233A750004G092 (Apr. 22, 2025).

15. ***A Greener World (“AGW”)***. Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI-USA) is a subrecipient of AGW’s award. On April 14, 2025, USDA notified AGW that its grant would be terminated, as USDA’s review of its grant showed that it failed to meet USDA’s priority that “a minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers.” *See* Exhibit I - Notice of Termination for AGW NR233A750004G080 (Apr. 14, 2025). USDA terminated AGW’s grant on April 22, 2025. *See* Exhibit J - Termination Letter for AGW NR233A750004G080 (Apr. 22, 2025).

16. Each of these terminations were based on an individualized review of the award and its consistency with three Farmer First policy priorities. Because they failed to meet the first

priority, they were terminated pursuant to 2 CFR § 200.340(a)(4). Other awards in the program were not terminated because they were consistent with the Farmer First policy priorities.

Paused NRCS Awards on DEIA List

17. On January 22, 2025, USDA Office of the Chief Financial Officer initiated a search of DEI-related financial assistance awards for termination pursuant to direction from new leadership. On January 23, 2025, USDA agencies and staff offices were instructed to further this effort by initiating an individualized, award-by-award review of grants, cooperative agreements, and other Federal financial assistance transactions to determine which should continue, which should be modified, and which should be terminated based on alignment with Administration priorities or the purposes for which the Federal award was made. NRCS staff reviewed funding announcements, award summaries, and project narratives, among other documents, as part of that review.

18. Review continued during the month of February when, in particular, agencies and staff offices were provided a series of terms or concepts to look for in their reviews. NRCS staff also reviewed awards for consistency with, among other policies and priorities, USDA Secretary's Memorandum 1078-001 and Secretary's Memorandum 1078-004. *See* Exhibit K and Exhibit L. These two memoranda relate to the Secretary's priorities on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

19. Because of the overlap between some of the terms and common scientific phrases in USDA awards (e.g., "diversity" and "biodiversity", "dei" and "deionization"), the review necessitated an individualized, award-by-award analysis to ensure that the concept reflected in the award was, in fact, related to DEI.

20. As part of that review, agencies and staff offices were also directed to evaluate awards for the use of racial, ethnic, and gender preferences, except where required by statute. In many cases, USDA statutes require such preferences for groups like "socially disadvantaged

farmers or ranchers” or “historically underserved producer.” Because agencies and staff offices needed to identify whether the preferences in the awards were statutorily required, an individualized, award-by-award analysis was also required.

21. As awards were identified containing DEI or racial, ethnic, or gender preferences, agencies and staff offices were directed to report those awards to the Office of the Chief Financial Officer for centralized reporting to the Office of the Secretary. This reporting process also required agencies and staff offices to identify recommendations for each award, including whether the award should continue as-is, activities under the award should be modified, or the award should be terminated in part or in full. This process also necessitated an individualized, award-by-award review, as recommendations were required on the award level. The review process continued through February and March, NRCS completed its review on or around March 4, 2025.

22. NRCS reviewed award number NR243A750003C062 and NR243A750003C045 as part of this Department-wide review. Both awards are part of the Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreement program. The purpose of the program was to develop community-led conservation projects so that historically underserved producers and underserved communities could access NRCS programs and services and learn of potential career opportunities in agriculture, natural resources, and related sciences. NRCS has identified elements of these awards that it believes are inconsistent with the Secretary’s priorities related to DEI.

23. At this time, the Office of the Secretary is actively reviewing agency and staff office recommendations regarding awards identified as part of the Department-wide review. Over the last several weeks, many of these awards were directed for termination, and agencies and staff offices have been issuing those terminations. Other awards remain on the list for further action.

24. I make the statements herein on the basis of my own personal knowledge, my review of agency records, and my discussions with colleagues familiar with the facts at issue in this case.

Executed on the 6th day of May 2025.



Karen Woodrich

Deputy Chief for Programs

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

April 14, 2025

The Conservation Innovation Fund
PO Box 34572
Washington, DC 20043

Dear Recipient:

USDA has undertaken a review of Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities (PCSC) grants. As a result of that review, we have reformed and overhauled PCSC as the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative and identified changes to better align the initiative with USDA priorities. USDA is reviewing existing grant agreements based on three Farmer First policy priorities:

- A minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers
- Grant recipients must have enrolled at least one producer as of 12/31/2024
- Grant recipients must have made a payment to at least one producer as of 12/31/2024

Our review of your grant NR233A750004G045 shows that you have failed to meet the first priority, and therefore, your grant will be terminated pursuant to 2 CFR 200.340(a)(4). You will be afforded the opportunity to resubmit a proposal that will be evaluated using the Farmer First policy priorities of AMP. You have until June 20, 2025, to submit your new proposal.

If you have questions, please contact Colton Buckley, Chief of Staff of the Natural Resources Conservation Service at colton.buckley@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aubrey J. D. Bettencourt".

AUBREY BETTENCOURT

Chief

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

April 22, 2025

THE CONSERVATION INNOVATION FUND
1100 13TH ST NW STE 800
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

This letter provides notice that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is terminating your federal award, NR233A750004G045, Expands markets for climate-smart dairy, beef and poultry industry in DE, NC, NJ, NY, MD, OH, PA, SC, TN, VA and WV and supports the implementation and monitoring of climate-smart practices, in accordance with the terms and conditions of your award, which include applicable regulations relating to termination. *See* 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.340-343.

Termination. On April 14, 2025, you received a letter notifying you that a review of your award showed that you failed to meet the first of three Farmer First policy priorities identified by USDA. Therefore, the award is inconsistent with, and no longer effectuates, Department priorities. *See* 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4). Pursuant to, among other authorities, 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.339-343, which are applicable to your award, the Department hereby terminates award number NR233A750004G045 in its entirety effective April 22, 2025.

Closure. You must submit all final reports and a final payment request no later than 120 calendar days after the date of this notice. You will be reimbursed for costs incurred up to the date of this notice that are determined to be consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.343, *Effects of suspension or termination*. Any open balance remaining 120 days after the date of this notice will be unavailable for payment.

If you do not submit all reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Federal award within one (1) year of the effective termination date, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) must proceed to close out the award with the information available. In these circumstances, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.344, NRCS must report your material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award in SAM.gov using the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). In this way, failure to submit timely and accurate final reports may affect your future funding.

Recipients are required by Federal regulation to retain all Federal award records consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. Termination of the agreement does not affect a Federal agency's or a pass-through entity's right to disallow costs and recover funds based on a later audit or other review. In addition, termination does not affect a recipient's obligation to return any funds due as a result of later refunds, corrections, or other transactions, including final indirect cost rate adjustments (refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.345).

Resubmission. Further instructions will be provided should you wish to resubmit a proposal under the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative.

If you have questions, contact your NRCS Program Contact at Jill.Reinhart@usda.gov.

Sincerely,
LOUIS ASPEY
Associate Chief

CC: Jill Reinhart, Management & Program Analyst, NRCS



April 14, 2025

Marbleseed
PO Box 339
Spring Valley, WI 54767-0339

Dear Recipient:

USDA has undertaken a review of Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities (PCSC) grants. As a result of that review, we have reformed and overhauled PCSC as the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative and identified changes to better align the initiative with USDA priorities. USDA is reviewing existing grant agreements based on three Farmer First policy priorities:

- A minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers
- Grant recipients must have enrolled at least one producer as of 12/31/2024
- Grant recipients must have made a payment to at least one producer as of 12/31/2024

Our review of your grant NR243A750004G010 shows that you have failed to meet the first priority, and therefore, your grant will be terminated pursuant to 2 CFR 200.340(a)(4). You will be afforded the opportunity to resubmit a proposal that will be evaluated using the Farmer First policy priorities of AMP. You have until June 20, 2025, to submit your new proposal.

If you have questions, please contact Colton Buckley, Chief of Staff of the Natural Resources Conservation Service at colton.buckley@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aubrey J. D. Bettencourt'.

AUBREY BETTENCOURT
Chief

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

April 22, 2025

MARBLESEED, INC.
N4598 DUTCH HOLLOW RD
MONROE, WI 53566

This letter provides notice that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is terminating your federal award, NR243A750004G010, Expands climate-smart wheat, grain, specialty and organic crop markets in IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, TN, WI and supports farmer CS practice implementation and monitoring., in accordance with the terms and conditions of your award, which include applicable regulations relating to termination. See 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.340-343.

Termination. On April 14, 2025, you received a letter notifying you that a review of your award showed that you failed to meet the first of three Farmer First policy priorities identified by USDA. Therefore, the award is inconsistent with, and no longer effectuates, Department priorities. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4). Pursuant to, among other authorities, 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.339-343, which are applicable to your award, the Department hereby terminates award number NR243A750004G010 in its entirety effective April 22, 2025.

Closure. You must submit all final reports and a final payment request no later than 120 calendar days after the date of this notice. You will be reimbursed for costs incurred up to the date of this notice that are determined to be consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.343, *Effects of suspension or termination*. Any open balance remaining 120 days after the date of this notice will be unavailable for payment.

If you do not submit all reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Federal award within one (1) year of the effective termination date, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) must proceed to close out the award with the information available. In these circumstances, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.344, NRCS must report your material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award in SAM.gov using the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). In this way, failure to submit timely and accurate final reports may affect your future funding.

Recipients are required by Federal regulation to retain all Federal award records consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. Termination of the agreement does not affect a Federal agency's or a pass-through entity's right to disallow costs and recover funds based on a later audit or other review. In addition, termination does not affect a recipient's obligation to return any funds due as a result of later refunds, corrections, or other transactions, including final indirect cost rate adjustments (refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.345).

Resubmission. Further instructions will be provided should you wish to resubmit a proposal under the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative.

If you have questions, contact your NRCS Program Contact at Jill.Reinhart@usda.gov.

Sincerely,
LOUIS ASPEY
Associate Chief

CC: Jill Reinhart, Management & Program Analyst, NRCS



April 14, 2025

Pennsylvania Association of Sustainable Agriculture
1631 N Front St
Harrisburg PA 17102-2435

Dear Recipient:

USDA has undertaken a review of Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities (PCSC) grants. As a result of that review, we have reformed and overhauled PCSC as the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative and identified changes to better align the initiative with USDA priorities. USDA is reviewing existing grant agreements based on three Farmer First policy priorities:

- A minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers
- Grant recipients must have enrolled at least one producer as of 12/31/2024
- Grant recipients must have made a payment to at least one producer as of 12/31/2024

Our review of your grant NR233A750004G025 shows that you have failed to meet the first priority, and therefore, your grant will be terminated pursuant to 2 CFR 200.340(a)(4). You will be afforded the opportunity to resubmit a proposal that will be evaluated using the Farmer First policy priorities of AMP. You have until June 20, 2025, to submit your new proposal.

If you have questions, please contact Colton Buckley, Chief of Staff of the Natural Resources Conservation Service at colton.buckley@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aubrey J. D. Bettencourt".

AUBREY BETTENCOURT

Chief



April 22, 2025

PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
1631 N FRONT ST FL 1
HARRISBURG, PA 17102

This letter provides notice that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is terminating your federal award, NR233A750004G025, Expands markets in the Eastern US for climate-smart dairy, grain, livestock, organic and specialty crops; supports farmer and rancher climate-smart practice implementation and monitoring, in accordance with the terms and conditions of your award, which include applicable regulations relating to termination. See 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.340-343.

Termination. On April 14, 2025, you received a letter notifying you that a review of your award showed that you failed to meet the first of three Farmer First policy priorities identified by USDA. Therefore, the award is inconsistent with, and no longer effectuates, Department priorities. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4). Pursuant to, among other authorities, 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.339-343, which are applicable to your award, the Department hereby terminates award number NR233A750004G025 in its entirety effective April 22, 2025.

Closure. You must submit all final reports and a final payment request no later than 120 calendar days after the date of this notice. You will be reimbursed for costs incurred up to the date of this notice that are determined to be consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.343, *Effects of suspension or termination*. Any open balance remaining 120 days after the date of this notice will be unavailable for payment.

If you do not submit all reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Federal award within one (1) year of the effective termination date, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) must proceed to close out the award with the information available. In these circumstances, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.344, NRCS must report your material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award in SAM.gov using the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). In this way, failure to submit timely and accurate final reports may affect your future funding.

Recipients are required by Federal regulation to retain all Federal award records consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. Termination of the agreement does not affect a Federal agency's or a pass-through entity's right to disallow costs and recover funds based on a later audit or other review. In addition, termination does not affect a recipient's obligation to return any funds due as a result of later refunds, corrections, or other transactions, including final indirect cost rate adjustments (refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.345).

Resubmission. Further instructions will be provided should you wish to resubmit a proposal under the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative.

If you have questions, contact your NRCS Program Contact at Jill.Reinhart@usda.gov.

Sincerely,
LOUIS ASPEY
Associate Chief

CC: Jill Reinhart, Management & Program Analyst, NRCS



April 14, 2025

Organic Association of Kentucky, Inc.
PO Box 22244
Lexington, KY 40522

Dear Recipient:

USDA has undertaken a review of Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities (PCSC) grants. As a result of that review, we have reformed and overhauled PCSC as the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative and identified changes to better align the initiative with USDA priorities. USDA is reviewing existing grant agreements based on three Farmer First policy priorities:

- A minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers
- Grant recipients must have enrolled at least one producer as of 12/31/2024
- Grant recipients must have made a payment to at least one producer as of 12/31/2024

Our review of your grant NR233A750004G092 shows that you have failed to meet the first priority, and therefore, your grant will be terminated pursuant to 2 CFR 200.340(a)(4). You will be afforded the opportunity to resubmit a proposal that will be evaluated using the Farmer First policy priorities of AMP. You have until June 20, 2025, to submit your new proposal.

If you have questions, please contact Colton Buckley, Chief of Staff of the Natural Resources Conservation Service at colton.buckley@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aubrey J. D. Bettencourt".

AUBREY BETTENCOURT
Chief



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

April 22, 2025

ORGANIC ASSOCIATION OF KENTUCKY INC
628 N BROADWAY STE 102
LEXINGTON, KY 40508

This letter provides notice that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is terminating your federal award, NR233A750004G092, Expands markets for climate-smart grass-fed lamb, grass fed beef, corn, soybeans, small grains, produce, dairy, agroforestry, and hemp in Kentucky and supports socially disadvantaged farmers., in accordance with the terms and conditions of your award, which include applicable regulations relating to termination. See 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.340-343.

Termination. On April 14, 2025, you received a letter notifying you that a review of your award showed that you failed to meet the first of three Farmer First policy priorities identified by USDA. Therefore, the award is inconsistent with, and no longer effectuates, Department priorities. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4). Pursuant to, among other authorities, 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.339-343, which are applicable to your award, the Department hereby terminates award number NR233A750004G092 in its entirety effective April 22, 2025.

Closure. You must submit all final reports and a final payment request no later than 120 calendar days after the date of this notice. You will be reimbursed for costs incurred up to the date of this notice that are determined to be consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.343, *Effects of suspension or termination*. Any open balance remaining 120 days after the date of this notice will be unavailable for payment.

If you do not submit all reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Federal award within one (1) year of the effective termination date, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) must proceed to close out the award with the information available. In these circumstances, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.344, NRCS must report your material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award in SAM.gov using the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). In this way, failure to submit timely and accurate final reports may affect your future funding.

Recipients are required by Federal regulation to retain all Federal award records consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. Termination of the agreement does not affect a Federal agency's or a pass-through entity's right to disallow costs and recover funds based on a later audit or other review. In addition, termination does not affect a recipient's obligation to return any funds due as a result of later refunds, corrections, or other transactions, including final indirect cost rate adjustments (refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.345).

Resubmission. Further instructions will be provided should you wish to resubmit a proposal under the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative.

If you have questions, contact your NRCS Program Contact at Jill.Reinhart@usda.gov.

Sincerely,
LOUIS ASPEY
Associate Chief

CC: Jill Reinhart, Management & Program Analyst, NRCS



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

April 14, 2025

A Greener World
PO Box 115
Terrebonne, OR 97760

Dear Recipient:

USDA has undertaken a review of Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities' (PCSC) grants. As a result of that review, we have reformed and overhauled PCSC as the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative and identified changes to better align the initiative with USDA priorities. USDA is reviewing existing grant agreements based on three Farmer First policy priorities:

- A minimum of 65% of federal funds must go to producers
- Grant recipients must have enrolled at least one producer as of 12/31/2024
- Grant recipients must have made a payment to at least one producer as of 12/31/2024

Our review of your grant NR233A750004G080 shows that you have failed to meet the first priority, and therefore, your grant will be terminated pursuant to 2 CFR 200.340(a)(4). You will be afforded the opportunity to resubmit a proposal that will be evaluated using the Farmer First policy priorities of AMP. You have until June 20, 2025, to submit your new proposal.

If you have questions, please contact Colton Buckley, Chief of Staff of the Natural Resources Conservation Service at colton.buckley@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aubrey J. D. Bettencourt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

AUBREY BETTENCOURT

Chief



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

April 22, 2025

GREENER WORLD A
8154 11TH ST
TERREBONNE, OR 97760

This letter provides notice that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is terminating your federal award, NR233A750004G080, Expands markets for climate-smart specialty crops, row crops & livestock nationwide (including AK and HI) & supports farmers and ranchers with implementation & monitoring of climate-smart practices, in accordance with the terms and conditions of your award, which include applicable regulations relating to termination. See 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.340-343.

Termination. On April 14, 2025, you received a letter notifying you that a review of your award showed that you failed to meet the first of three Farmer First policy priorities identified by USDA. Therefore, the award is inconsistent with, and no longer effectuates, Department priorities. See 2 C.F.R. § 200.340(a)(4). Pursuant to, among other authorities, 2 C.F.R. §§ 200.339-343, which are applicable to your award, the Department hereby terminates award number NR233A750004G080 in its entirety effective April 22, 2025.

Closure. You must submit all final reports and a final payment request no later than 120 calendar days after the date of this notice. You will be reimbursed for costs incurred up to the date of this notice that are determined to be consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.343, *Effects of suspension or termination*. Any open balance remaining 120 days after the date of this notice will be unavailable for payment.

If you do not submit all reports in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Federal award within one (1) year of the effective termination date, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) must proceed to close out the award with the information available. In these circumstances, in accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.344, NRCS must report your material failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the award in SAM.gov using the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). In this way, failure to submit timely and accurate final reports may affect your future funding.

Recipients are required by Federal regulation to retain all Federal award records consistent with 2 C.F.R. § 200.334. Termination of the agreement does not affect a Federal agency's or a pass-through entity's right to disallow costs and recover funds based on a later audit or other review. In addition, termination does not affect a recipient's obligation to return any funds due as a result of later refunds, corrections, or other transactions, including final indirect cost rate adjustments (refer to 2 C.F.R. § 200.345).

Resubmission. Further instructions will be provided should you wish to resubmit a proposal under the Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative.

If you have questions, contact your NRCS Program Contact at Jill.Reinhart@usda.gov.

Sincerely,
LOUIS ASPEY
Associate Chief

CC: Jill Reinhart, Management & Program Analyst, NRCS

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM 1078-001

February 13, 2025

**PRIORITIZING UNITY, EQUALITY, MERITOCRACY, AND COLOR-BLIND
POLICIES, IN THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum is to establish a return to American principles and realign the Department's focus towards its original objectives of maximizing and promoting American agriculture, ensuring a safe, nutritious and secure food supply, enhancing rural prosperity, and protecting our National Forests. To achieve this purpose, this memorandum orders the rescission of all Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) programs, including the Special Emphasis Programs (SEP), and the Department to reprioritize unity, equality, meritocracy, and color-blind policies.

On the Great Seal of the United States of America lies a motto that describes the uniqueness of our nation, *E Pluribus Unum*, out of many one. It is a phrase that transcends politics, identities, and individualistic desires. A phrase that promotes a concept of oneness in the nation.

Similarly, at the heart of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) lies the mission of seeing Americans fed. It is a mission that likewise transcends all identities and can unite every American. After all, if Americans are not fed, then no other issue matters. Our differences are a strength, but only to the extent that we can harness those differences into a united objective. At times, the goal of seeing Americans fed, has been replaced by prioritizing social issues that promote division, not unity. As a taxpayer-funded Department, it is our duty to ensure the highest quality of service, and this cannot be done when prioritizing politics over our mission. It is in this spirit, that recent Executive Orders including: *Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing*; *Reforming The Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service*; *Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing*; *Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government*; and *Eradicating Anti-Christian Bias* were created.

In that spirit, the spirit of unity, the spirit of *E Pluribus Unum*, and in compliance with the aforementioned executive orders, this Department will focus on what unites us, not on what divides us. Therefore, this Department and all supporting agencies and mission areas will not use official resources in the promotion of identity-based events. Instead, USDA's resources

and time will be focused on our objectives at USDA and celebrating our shared unity as Americans.

2. POLICY

To establish this priority, USDA will:

1. **End all Critical Race Theory, DEIA, and Gender Ideology Programs and Groups:** There shall be no USDA resources expended, including employee time, in the creation, teaching, promotion, or facilitation of Critical Race Theory, DEIA, or Gender Ideology. Specifically, USDA will cease all Special Emphasis Programs as defined by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. In addition, any committee, board, council, task force, or working group, not established by statute, whose work touches on the above stated ideologies are hereby disbanded. Further guidance shall be forthcoming regarding the scope of the actions ordered.
2. **Realigning Department Values Towards Unity, Equality, Meritocracy, and Color-Blind Policies:** Because 'equity' is a concept at war with this nation's founding principles, the Department shall prioritize meritocracy in all its actions and policies.
3. **Ceasing of Identity Month Celebrations:** Effective March 1, 2025, USDA will cease using Departmental resources for all identity month celebrations including in the form of internet postings, Departmental sponsored event celebrations, and promotional materials.
4. **Prioritization of Meritocracy in all USDA Programs:** Unless statutorily required by law, no USDA form shall require information about or base a decision, to any extent, on an individuals' belonging to a particular identity group.
5. **Promoting Biological Truth of Only Two Sexes:** All USDA agencies and organizations shall review and ensure that all forms, applications, programs, and materials distributed both internally and externally by USDA reflect this foundational truth, by only allowing for the choice of male or female.

The Office of Budget and Programs Analysis (OBPA) and Office of General Counsel (OGC) shall assist USDA agencies and organizations properly to comply with the provisions of this.

3. EXISTING DIRECTIVES

This Secretary Memorandum overrides Departmental Regulation 4230-002 dated June 4, 2009, in its entirety due to updates to policies and Executive Orders.

4. INCIDENTAL TRANSFERS

The Assistant Secretary for Administration, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Director, Office of Budget and Program Analysis, are authorized to approve such transfers of funds, personnel, employment authority, space, records, property, and incidentals as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this Memorandum.

5. EFFECTIVE DATE AND TERMINATION

This delegation is effective immediately and will remain in effect for 1 year from the effective date, or until such earlier time as the Department's published delegations of authority have been revised to incorporate the provisions of this Memorandum.

/s/ Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture



Secretary Brooke L. Rollins

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM 1078-004

March 13, 2025

**DIRECTIVE ON DEPARTMENTAL GRANT AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
PRIORITIES**

1. PURPOSE

It is the policy of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a return to American principles and realign the Department's focus towards its original objectives of maximizing and promoting American agriculture; ensuring a safe, nutritious, and secure food supply; enhancing rural prosperity; and protecting our National Forests. This Memorandum prioritizes unity, equality, meritocracy, and color-blindness in furtherance of that policy. The Department's resources must be conserved and focused upon its original objectives, as well as its obligations to the Constitution and laws of the United States. This priority includes ensuring that the Department's grants, cooperative agreements, and other similar arrangements, including mutual interest agreements (collectively, "awards"), do not support programs or organizations that promote or take part in diversity, equity, and inclusion ("DEI") initiatives or any other initiatives that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or another protected characteristic. DEI policies and practices can violate both the letter and purpose of Federal civil rights laws and conflict with the Department's policy of prioritizing merit, fairness, and excellence in furtherance of the Department's mission. In addition to complying with the letter and spirit of the civil rights laws, it is vital that the Department assess whether all award payments are free from fraud, abuse, and duplication, as well as to assess whether current awards are in the best interests of the United States.

2. POLICY

To establish and safeguard the Department's priorities, all USDA agencies and staff offices that issue awards must conduct an internal review of all active awards still in their period of performance, as well as awards selected for funding but not yet obligated or awarded to specific individuals or entities (e.g., under existing notices of funding opportunities).

Such review shall be limited to ensuring that the Department does not fund or no longer funds discriminatory practices—including in the form of DEI—that are either contrary to

law or to the Department's policy objectives, as well as to ensure that all awards are free from fraud, abuse, and duplication. Awards deemed inconsistent with the Department's priorities shall, to the extent permitted by applicable law, be terminated, in whole or in part, or otherwise modified in accordance with any applicable regulations and notice and procedural requirements in the relevant award, agreement, or other instrument.

This Directive shall be implemented by all Departmental personnel responsible for award-related activities, including but not limited to those responsible for planning, budgeting, executing and administering awards.

Notwithstanding this Directive, any disbursements on open awards paused due to any Office of Management and Budget memorandum or any Executive Order underlying such memorandum shall be immediately released to the extent required by law or court order.

/s/ Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture